ANDERSON COUNTY COUNCIL

SPECIAL CALLED COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 20, 2019

IN ATTENDANCE:
TOMMY DUNN, CHAIRMAN
GRACIE FLOYD
RAY GRAHAM
CRAIG WOOTEN
BRETT SANDERS
CINDY WILSON

ALSO PRESENT:
RUSTY BURNS
LEON HARMON
LACEY CROEGAERT
TOMMY DUNN: ... talk about the road fees, nuts and bolts in it. At this time I’d like for us all to rise for invocation and pledge of allegiance by Vice Chairman Graham.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE BY RAY GRAHAM

TOMMY DUNN: At this time I’d like to ask Ms. Davis, if she would, she’s got a thing I’ve asked her to do. And Mr. Harmon (mic cutting out) on the road fee, people know what’s in the ordinance. What I’ve asked him to do is just talk about exemptions and what not, what the state law allows and how it’s written and what will hold up. Ms. Davis.

RITA DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The state law that you’re talking about apparently is 4-9-30, 5(a) in particular. And that gives you, as county council, the authority to assess property taxes, of course, and uniform service charges so that we can finance our governmental operations, including roads, as you see there. But when you look at the statute it doesn’t tell you how much of a fee to set, of course, or the persons who it can be imposed upon. Home Rule governs that. But you have to think about -- and like you said, Mr. Harmon is here to talk about legality of -- you have to think about equal protection and reasonableness. But they do allow us to impose a uniform service charge instead of raising property taxes to fund county services.

The theory is that, as we’ve been saying in our town hall meetings, that the people that receive a special benefit of a county service should be the ones that are charged for that service, if at all possible. At least it gives you the capability to do that. But if it’s -- you have a proper legislative purpose and the members of each class are treated equally, then the equal protection clause, you should be fine.

And there is case law on that, that Mr. Harmon can expound upon, but I just wanted to give you that framework as we’re fixing to contemplate which classes of individuals we might want to exempt.

TOMMY DUNN: Thank you, Ms. Davis.

GRACIE FLOYD: Ms. Davis, is this -- this is one of the questions that I’ve been asked a lot, and it concerns our citizen -- citizens, whether or not they will be subjected to this tax, as well. In my meeting that I had here, the people were told that by the state statute that senior citizens was exempt. But at my meeting they were told that. But at a meeting that we had yesterday -- I think it was yesterday. There’s too many meetings in a short period of time; everything is running together. But we were at the Bleckley Inn and we were meeting with Oconee, Pickens and Anderson. And I was told there that county council sets that exemptions, those exemptions; that it doesn’t have to be an exemption or it does.

Now, a lot of folks out there are saying that everybody
should pay because everybody who has a driver’s license uses the street. Okay. But now is this in lieu -- is this what we’re talking about now?

RITA DAVIS: Yes, ma’am. My understanding, that’s why council is here today, to discuss who do we want to exempt under our ordinance.

GRACIE FLOYD: Okay. See, the folks that I talked to went away thinking that the state protected ---

RITA DAVIS: Well, let me just say, ma’am, we’re here to talk about what exemptions. But if at all possible, we would like to piggyback and use the state exemptions. It’s already been approved by the General Assembly and it makes sense administratively and legally, I would think.

GRACIE FLOYD: Okay. I understand that. So what the people were told at my meeting about the exempt had already been decided because they were told that; they were told that.

RITA DAVIS: No, ma’am. Nothing has really been decided. You know, council hasn’t raised their hand three times.

TOMMY DUNN: Let’s move on.

GRACIE FLOYD: Well, I know that the council did not raise their hand, but it did come up at the meeting. I have a person here who was there, and it did come up at the meeting.

RITA DAVIS: Yes, ma’am. And if you don’t ---

GRACIE FLOYD: I’m just trying to get it straightened out now so that I can go back and tell folks what they ---

RITA DAVIS: Yes, ma’am. We’re getting straight to your point, Ms. Floyd, right now. These are the things that have come up and we’ve talked about amongst council members. And you’ll notice that we’ve put the state law on the five bullet points. I didn’t on the first because state law, if you’re sixty-four you pay ninety-five percent of the forty dollar registration fee. When you turn sixty-five you only pay ninety percent. But council has discussed, if you’re sixty-four and over, we don’t -- possibly, and that’s for the seven members to decide that -- you will not be charged that. That’s one consideration I’d like you to think about and discuss.

The second one, currently, under state law, if you’re a war time disabled veteran, two of your vehicles you do not have to pay the forty dollar registration fee. And keep in mind, when we’re talking about these items, we’re only talking about registration fee. Some of them are subject to property taxes and that’s a whole different animal. But under state law two of your vehicles, if you’re a war time disabled
veteran.

The third item we’d like you to think about is a former POW and the surviving spouse of that POW until they remarry. Again, limit of two vehicles.

The fourth bullet point that we’d like you to think about, disabled veterans required to use wheelchairs are totally exempt under the code section you see there, 56-3-1910.

The fifth bullet point to think about is a recipient of a purple heart. Limit two, again, of any vehicles that that person may have.

Again, we’re coming to you asking you to consider this because currently those individuals that fall under these classes except the first one, they don’t -- up to two vehicles, they do not pay that forty dollar registration fee. So we’re asking council to consider that.

At the bottom I’m just reminding you that any federal, state, local government or political subdivision would be exempted, as well.

Continue on?

TOMMY DUNN: Ms. Davis, I just want to stop here a second. Also this would be more accessible to be enforced as far as Mr. Hunter’s department about going through this, mirroring on this right here, give them something to go by?

RITA DAVIS: That is correct.

TOMMY DUNN: And my understanding, I think on a couple of those, the state don’t charge now, we would have charged and we’ll be doing something the state don’t do.

RITA DAVIS: That’s right; yes, sir.

TOMMY DUNN: Mr. Harmon, would you speak just a little bit on the law as far as what you found out what could happen, what’s been defended if you start putting in some exemptions that we should open up?

LEON HARMON: Yes. I’ll be glad to address that, Mr. Chairman, members of council. First of all, the -- a road service charge has been held by the Supreme Court not to be a tax. It’s a fee. That was in the case of Brown versus County of Horry back in 1992. What the Court looked at though was whether or not the fee met the uniformity requirements. That’s the requirement in the statute that any fee that’s imposed must meet the uniformity requirement.

When you get to talking about exemptions like we have on the slide that Ms. Davis gave you, those would more than likely be evaluated under an equal protection type analysis and whether or not they’re reasonable under the circumstances in which they are imposed. And the Brown versus County of Horry case talked about that, even though that case did not specifically address a particular exemption like we’re speaking of. I can tell you that there’s at least one attorney general’s opinion where older citizens were included.
in a classification and the opinion was to the effect that
that classification would meet equal protection analysis.

Now, there’s not a Court case on that and those are
opinions until a Court case comes down. But I think we could
-- we would have a reasonable explanation for why we selected
these categories for potential exemptions from the road fee.

TOMMY DUNN: Thank you, Mr. Harmon. Ms. Davis.

RITA DAVIS: Yes, sir. Again, I just wanted
to repeat that currently there’s been discussion that there
would be a sunset clause, it would expire after four years,
have to come back before council for three readings of a brand
new ordinance to continue the road fee.

And here’s, of course, where we need input from council,
as well. There was discussion of reducing the general fund
millage by one mil if the road fee was passed. It’s also been
discussed, well, if we reduce the general fund millage by one
mil, let’s move that millage over to the road fee fund to be
used for district paving exclusively. So that’s been
discussed, as well, but we’ll need direction from council.

GRACIE FLOYD: Can we ask questions along the
way?

TOMMY DUNN: Just wait for her to get a few
more things --

RITA DAVIS: And also today we’d like to
talk about the municipal allocation, potentially the formula
that might be used. So those are the hot button topics that
we need decisions on from council. Thank you, sir.

TOMMY DUNN: A potential on the small towns,
towns (mic cutting out) Mr. Hopkins is going to speak to that,
the math they’ve come up with and what y’all are recommending.

HOLT HOPKINS: (Inaudible) accounts. But
after talking with Mr. Burns and others, we feel like, you
know, why not just use what the state uses for C-funds.
Instead of being on the statewide level, it would be on the
countywide level. And what they do -- how they distribute the
C-funds that are collected in the state, they take a third and
then apply the percentage of land area, square mileage like a
county, well, we’re wanting to do the same on the towns. So
it would be one-third area, one-third population and one-third
mileage, road mileage. That gives them -- you know, some may
have a bigger footprint; it gives them a little edge. Some
may have more miles; that gives them a little edge. Or if
they have a bigger population; that gives them a little edge.
It’s just -- we think it’s a pretty fair formula to use. We
didn’t create it, we’re just using what the state uses for C-
funds.

TOMMY DUNN: Any comments or questions for
Mr. Hopkins on that particular point?

CRAIG WOOTEN: I guess from my perspective,
you’re saying like thirty-three percent, thirty-three percent population, thirty-three percent miles. I guess representing ---

HOLT HOPKINS: Let’s say if it’s four million dollars, or for the math, let’s say three million. One million would be divided up by percentage of the land mass you have, what area you have. The other million would be divided up by what percentage of population you have.

CRAIG WOOTEN: I can see that. I guess my concern representing a really small district but that has high population, you know, from my standpoint that might put us in a sixty-six percent disadvantage. We don’t have the land area. We don’t have the miles. We just have the population. So I mean that’s just -- that would be a consideration on my part.

TOMMY DUNN: I want to make sure, this would only affect School District 6 of Anderson. The other districts -- if you’re not in the city of Anderson (mic cutting out) protected.

HOLT HOPKINS: This is just how to give -- how much to give the towns.

CRAIG WOOTEN: I see. Okay.

TOMMY DUNN: Like Williamston, Belton, Honea Path.

CRAIG WOOTEN: Well, what is our -- and this may be too in-depth right now, but what is our accountability from a town when we allocate based on this formula that we feel confident that they’ll participate with the wishes or the intent of the fee.

HOLT HOPKINS: In the past, and I hope you’ll consider letting us continue to do this, we don’t give them a blank -- we don’t write them a check. They have to present us an invoice and we have to verify that the work was done.

CRAIG WOOTEN: Okay.

HOLT HOPKINS: We don’t go check quality and all that, but we just verify that work was done and here’s an invoice in hand.

TOMMY DUNN: (Inaudible) Mr. Hopkins, I guess I’m taking on the past, y’all just left it up to the small towns or municipalities to check the quality of work?

HOLT HOPKINS: Yes.

TOMMY DUNN: I just think if it does move forward and it goes, I think the county should check to make sure the quality of work is there. In some way, shape or form, we need (mic cutting out). Y’all are checking everything else in the county to make sure it’s done right. We (mic cutting out) make some kind of way.

HOLT HOPKINS: And I understand. Let me go into a little more detailed. If we have a county-wide paving contract, we have offered to do any paving that they wish to
just add it to ours. Can we do that through contract or agreement with the town? If we’re managing the contract we will have our inspectors on the job the whole time. If it’s a C-fund project, we will make sure that that money -- our county money will be used as a match to go toward the C-funds and then the C-funds will have their inspectors. Some of these that’s like they use the money to put up a sign, dig out a ditch, put in a pipe, those kind of things, we will check the quality the best we can. But unless you’re asking us to leave an inspector out there when they’re doing all maintenance ---

TOMMY DUNN: Only thing I’m asking, we ain’t got nothing in writing; we’re just talking about an ordinance. If we do this, it’s our full intention as far as asphalt and bridge work, that’s doing the same thing. They shouldn’t take our money and go over here and dig out a ditch. That money should be put on asphalt or bridges. We should have some quality assurance is going to be done to our specifications if we’re doing something with that money. I just think that’s a little bit of ---

HOLT HOPKINS: We can make sure that the inspections are included in whatever contract (mic cutting out). A lot of the money also is spent to reimburse us to come do their driveways ---

TOMMY DUNN: Yeah, but keep -- I’m talking about if this road thing goes through. I ain’t talking about other stuff. I’m talking about strictly on this here. Mr. Graham.

RAY GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, I guess -- and I’m thinking I’m probably on the same track as what you’re saying. Number one, I mean I’ve got a lot of municipalities in my district. So naturally I’m going -- I definitely agree; we’ve got to come up with some type of funding where we’re going to be able to benefit municipalities, as well.

To me, I would go as far as saying, you know, like you had said, I mean basically if this road fee does pass, it’s got to be spent on asphalt or bridge work. I mean it cannot be spent on culverts or different things outside of that scope. The same thing would be for the money that’s raised through this for the municipalities. Common sense, you know, Anderson City, not throwing them out there, but I mean they would probably be the only one with enough of either horsepower to go and get some bids. You go get the town of Iva, the city of Belton, Honea Path, Williamston, Pelzer, you get those municipalities that goes out and tries to bid a job. There’s no way they’re going to be able to get a job at the price that we would be able to get it as a county.

So to me, you know, the money is coming from us, if we do pass it, the council members putting their head out on the chopping block to pass this, I think we should be involved as
far as inspecting and ensuring it’s right. I know you
probably question that because that’s going to put more work
on you and your guys, but I mean my concern there, at the end
of the day, at the end of four years, if this goes through,
what are we going to show the people that we were able to
accomplish with this money? I know the ones that’s got
municipalities in their districts, we’ve got to show them that
we stood our ground and got them some funding out of this, as
well. But at the end of the day we’ve got to show, at the end
of this four years, this is what the citizens that’s paying
this money, which be advised, we’re paying it, too, but these
citizens that’s paying this money is getting a bang for the
buck. We know that that road paved in Belton, that road paved
in Iva. It’s done quality. It’s done efficiently. It was
done through a normal bidding process. And our guys from the
county inspected and ensured that it was completed at the end
they paid for it. I would be leaning more toward that.
And I think, at the end of the day, it’s going to increase
our funding as far as the county, for we’re going to be
getting more work done through our bidding process, which
hopefully is going to get us even better pricing. So I think
it would be a win-win for everybody. I don’t know.

HOLT HOPKINS: It’s just a little tricky, I
guess, why I’m ---
RAY GRAHAM: It is. Well, you’re crossing
paths there.

HOLT HOPKINS: Well, it’s their authority.
It’s their roads and it’s their everything. But we can’t hold
back the money unless they guarantee the quality by letting us
inspect it or whatever.

TOMMY DUNN: Well, the simple thing it seems
to me to (inaudible). Just like it happens on (mic cutting
out). You know, money is going to be here tomorrow, whatever
form we come up with, and they should submit that the road
needs to be fixed. Y’all, the road department, y’all go out
and see it does, put that in the contract. Like Ray is
talking about, you’re going to get more bang for your buck
when it’s all (mic cutting out).

RAY GRAHAM: At the end of the day, they’re
county citizens, as well. So I mean we’re ensuring
accountability for every bit of these tax dollars. If we
pass, we’re ensuring that accountability there. And I mean, I
tell you, it’s a huge burden sitting up here trying to decide
this. I mean I’ve got people coming both ways. I think we’ve
got to do something for our roads. And I tell you, I’d feel
real comfortable, naturally if we’re taking care of the
municipalities because I’ve got a lot of them in my district;
and number two, that we’re ensuring that quality is where it
needs to be and those citizens is being taken care of. One,
because we know that we’ve inspected and we got the best price
we could working hand-in-hand with that municipality. I think
we could do it. I don’t think that -- I know there would be
some ropes to jump through or hoops, but I mean, I think we
could do it.

CINDY WILSON: Mr. Chairman.

TOMMY DUNN: Ms. Floyd and then we’ll come
to you, Ms. Wilson. You got something to say on the
municipalities?

GRACIE FLOYD: No. I have something to go
back to her before she gets too far.

TOMMY DUNN: We’re going to get back to
that. Let’s stay on, while Mr. Hopkins is up here, on the
municipality things. Is that what you’ve got something on,
Ms. ---

GRACIE FLOYD: No, wait a minute; I still have
the floor.

TOMMY DUNN: Okay. Go ahead.

GRACIE FLOYD: Mr. Holt, Mr. Hopkins; okay, on
the municipality part of it, the part that got me mostly was
sometime ago we allocated some funds to Anderson City to fix
some roads. And I don’t think that they got around to fixing
the road. And did we get -- I think we took the money back.
Am I correct on that? You don’t remember either, huh?

HOLT HOPKINS: No. I kind of remember. I’m
trying to remember what actually occurred with the money.
They did do some work. They used some of the county money and
went to C-funds to get more to match it because C-fund
Committee is requiring a match now. But back in that time
they let a significant amount of money just sit there and not
do anything. And I do think you unallocated it.

GRACIE FLOYD: I did. I unallocated the
funds. But now that’s something that if we get this money,
that’s something that we’re going to have to be cognizant of;
okay, because if they’re not using the money then it can be
used somewhere else.

HOLT HOPKINS: We can use it out in the county
all day long.

GRACIE FLOYD: That’s what I know. But if
it’s not being used for the purpose for which it was given, we
need to have some stopgaps in there so that we can go back and
take the money back or do it for them or something to that
point. Okay. That’s the point that I just wanted to bring
up. You know, getting money and using money is two different
things.

TOMMY DUNN: That’s the reason I said when
we started just a few minutes ago, that’s the reason the money
out to be -- they ought to not get no money. When the work’s
done they give you the invoice, money right here. That’ll
keep up and give you a list of everything. That would solve
all of that. Ms. Wilson.
CINDY WILSON: Thank you. District 7 has four municipalities, so we’re very aware of the problems here. The C-fund formula sounds like it’s the most fair. But -- and Mr. Burns, you correct me -- for example, the town of Honea Path has frequently bid out their own projects with their appropriation from us to a better success than if we had done it. And then the town of Williamston relies heavily on us, I think, from time to time. So ---

TOMMY DUNN: If Honea Path can do it better maybe we need to get them to bid ours out.

CINDY WILSON: Yeah. I thinking that before -- you know, if this continued and it’s passed, before it’s hammered down, it would be appropriate to sit down with our municipalities and figure out what works the smoothest that has the best oversight, checks and balances and the best rate of success.

HOLT HOPKINS: Part of their success is their location. We’ve been doing some of that the past few years. We’re -- one big contract county-wide is not the most efficient price-wise. We’ve found that if we split the northern part of the county up, we get better prices for plants that are in that area. The Pendleton area or west, if we split the county up a little bit we can get better prices because they can get it closer to a plant. So we’ll be doing some of that through some of these municipal ---

CINDY WILSON: Well, and noting the priority list that you’ve given us over the years, you’ve actually gone to the extent of grouping several roads together for consideration for that reason, and it has been helpful.

HOLT HOPKINS: You almost have to do the subdivisions that way because if you pave one road in a subdivision, we’ll all get called if we don’t do them all.

CINDY WILSON: So it would probably be wise to have a meeting with the towns and set up some ideas of how it would work best for the county and the towns.

TOMMY DUNN: I agree. The main thing, though, we’ve got to look after and make sure the work is being done. Like I said, I think no matter if they want to bid it out or what not, that’s what’s working now. They produce an invoice and we know the work is being done. But still we need to have some checks and balances that it’s being done correctly.

HOLT HOPKINS: I can share -- using that formula I can share based on four million dollars if that’s what we have here, just some samples. City of Anderson would be the biggest one. Based on that formula it would be two hundred and sixty-five thousand. Belton would be forty-nine, almost fifty thousand. Honea Path would be forty-six thousand. Iva would be about sixteen thousand. Pelzer would be seventeen thousand. Pendleton, forty-eight thousand.
Starr, fifty-two hundred. West Pelzer about ten thousand and
Williamston about sixty (mic cutting out) based on that (mic
cutting out).

CRAIG WOOTEN:    I’ve got a question, and I
don’t want to over-complicate it. But like based on those
numbers you were talking about that could potentially go to
the cities and you can talk about whether or not -- you know,
how you’re going to be able to ensure quality. But in an
attempt to get, let’s say, like an exponential effect, for
example you gave two hundred and sixty thousand dollar
reference to the city of Anderson. Is it possible to say,
hey, we’ll give you a hundred thousand with accountability to
pave, or if you match, we’ll give you two sixty if you match
the two sixty? So that way we can leverage the cities to put
skin in the game to try to pave more roads.

HOLT HOPKINS:    We’ve been doing that through
the C-funds for the last two years. They don’t (inaudible).

CRAIG WOOTEN:    They don’t participate?
HOLT HOPKINS:    They don’t participate because
they don’t have the money. It took the city of Anderson two
years to be able to get a ten percent match to go to C-fund to
get money from them. They’re using this money to match C-
funds.

CRAIG WOOTEN:    Okay.
TOMMY DUNN:    Well, I understand perfectly
what you’re saying what they’re doing. I like Mr. Wooten’s
idea. All it is (inaudible) they ain’t wanting to do nothing,
as you know, ain’t wanting to do nothing. They ain’t wanting
to spend their money. It ain’t that they ain’t got it
(inaudible). Can’t tell me what the city’s (mic cutting out).
Having a hard time finding out (mic cutting out).

HOLT HOPKINS:    But the town of Starr doesn’t
have any money. I mean the smaller municipalities don’t have
a way to generate money.

BRETT SANDERS:    Mr. Hopkins, does the C-fund
have a max amount we’re allowed to contribute within the max?
HOLT HOPKINS:    There’s a limit to how much
money they have available. But they’re requiring everybody to
do a ten percent match.

BRETT SANDERS:    Well, I didn’t know, I mean, if
there was a road fee and there’s four million a year, why
won’t we put the four million toward the C-fund and have them
match to make it eight million (mic cutting out) and then that
committee could then ---

TOMMY DUNN:    They don’t have eight million
dollars.

HOLT HOPKINS:    At the max they’re going to
have in the next couple of years, C-funds won’t have but about
three million that the locals can use. So that’s the ---

TOMMY DUNN:    It’s not all the gas money, you
know what I’m talking about?

HOLT HOPKINS: Three million is about the ceiling we could ask for because it’s just not there. They get a total of four million ---

BRETT SANDERS: (Mic cutting out) 1.5 million and they match it, we can double (mic cutting out) if that was possible. I don’t know if we can be outside the box or ---

TOMMY DUNN: No. I think that’s something to think about.

BRETT SANDERS: Some of these cities or municipalities (change of audio) don’t have the money (mic cutting out) forth thousand, fifty thousand you’re talking about (mic cutting out) put it in C-funds for them, get it matched and doubled.

HOLT HOPKINS: And more likely that’s the way we would do it because I don’t want to have to hire two more, three more inspectors to handle municipal work. But the C-funds is already set up that way. They’ve already got an engineering firm and inspectors to check all the municipal work. More than likely the town will take whatever money you allocate. They won’t touch it, but they’ll say, okay, C-fund, we have that amount of money to match. Will you give us ---

BRETT SANDERS: (Mic cutting out).

HOLT HOPKINS: Well, they could get ninety percent more basically. They could take that fifty and turn it into half a million dollars if they needed that much paving. But they’re using county road fee money to go match for the gasoline tax. More than likely that’s the way it’s going to turn out to. We’ll let them -- let the C-fund Committee handle municipal stuff. And in some cases (mic cutting out) cases we’d tag it on to any contract Matt would have.

GRACIE FLOYD: Mr. Chairman?

TOMMY DUNN: Ms. Floyd’s got ---

GRACIE FLOYD: Holt, I would like to have a copy of the thing you were reading from off your phone about how much it will cost do the road thing.

But the thing is, aren’t we ahead -- haven’t we put the cart in front of the horse? Because we have to figure out if we’re going to get the money what ways are we going to do to get the money to do these things.

HOLT HOPKINS: We’ve had some questions from the towns, okay, what does it mean to us? And so we wanted ---

GRACIE FLOYD: Well, but today’s meeting we need to start looking at if we’re going to get it now. At that meeting yesterday there were a lot of good ideas that the other counties have done. You weren’t at that meeting; were you? I really wish you were. There were other things that other counties have done to get the same thing that we have.
Instead of trying to reinvent the wheels, I think that we ought to look at some of the things that they have done with success. Some of the things that they did were not successful and they were the ones who said it. They told us. And there were some that was very successful that they’re doing all right.

But instead of trying to -- one thing I heard, if I’m still correct about what we’re supposed to be doing here, but one thing I heard that I liked a lot was that they did a tax -- I’m sorry -- they did a referendum and the people have a chance to vote on whether or not they wanted to pay a penny sales tax and with that penny it was enough money to keep them going. They had a sunset clause on it, but it was enough money to keep them going. There’s a lot of people out there that I’ve heard from and I’m sure some of you have heard from that just don’t like this twenty-five dollar tax thing. And I think that we ought to at least give some credence to what they are saying here. Let’s do the one percent sales tax. Let’s let them vote on it. If they have a chance to vote on it, they will be more liable to go with us and to help us through this thing.

And another thing, on a one cents penny sales tax, everybody pays; not only our citizens but also people who are coming into our town who are -- go to dinner or to shop or just whatever. They pay a portion of this thing, too, rather than tax, rather than tax me the twenty-five dollars, and rather to have to leave some people off of it. I even heard that the way the twenty-five dollars may not even give us enough money. But with the penny sales tax that you will have enough money to do it.

Now, another thing, too, this thing about this -- I hate to bring it up and y’all may not even let me finish it, but I’m going to say it. This thing about giving that man up in Pendleton a fifty percent property tax reduction is not helping us either because why do we give him a fifty cents -- fifty percent property tax reduction on building big expensive houses and then come back to us and say, well, we need twenty-five dollars for the road. It doesn’t jive. But this is one of the things I heard yesterday about the one cent -- and I’m for that one. I’m for that one. Thank you.

TOMMY DUNN: Thank you. Please, this meeting today we’re not going to debate on a road fee or not. That ain’t what this meeting is about. That’s coming. Today is to putting something -- nuts and bolts to an ordinance we’re going to do. Now we’ll discuss all day long ---

GRACIE FLOYD: Same thing.

TOMMY DUNN: --- (mic cutting out) different options and stuff (inaudible). Just for reference on the one cent sales tax, talk to Greenwood.

RAY GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman?
TOMMY DUNN: Mr. Wooten and you’re next.

CRAIG WOOTEN: Just real quick, is this a possibility for like one of the municipalities to -- say they know they’re going to get two hundred and sixty thousand dollars and they know they’re going to get it four years in a row because we have the sunset clause. They could get it longer. Could they go ahead and borrow and do a million dollars of work and just know that they’ve got that money to pay that back over four years, on an effort to -- and economies of scale to get a better contract, get more paved, to do more? Would we allow that?

HOLT HOPKINS: That’s really a county council question if we would allow that or not. Some years we have banked it, so to speak, allowed them to build it up. But that has caused problems, as Ms. Floyd pointed out, to sit on it. Now to borrow against it, I think that opens up a whole other legal question as far as can we pledge that this money is always going to be the same amount year after year into the future. We normally look back and let them save their money and use it for a big project. We’ve never let them borrow against it because a new council could come in and change the formula. That’s what I’d be worried about.

CRAIG WOOTEN: Okay.

HOLT HOPKINS: It would almost be binding future councils.

CRAIG WOOTEN: And they would need at least ten or fifteen.

TOMMY DUNN: Mr. Graham.

RAY GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman, back to a couple other comments that was mentioned earlier. One of my concerns was municipalities not being able to -- if they don’t spend the money that we could go back and take the money back. I was actually glad that you kind of had some numbers on you and threwed some of the projections as far as what some of these municipalities would be receiving. And, you know, you look at West Pelzer, Iva, Pelzer; I mean basically fifteen, eighteen thousand dollars, ten thousand dollars, you look at those numbers, they’re not going to be able to do a whole lot in one year with that type of money. So it’s very likely that they would have to bank that money for three years or four years to truly be able to go in and do something.

So I would definitely -- I understand banking a lot of money over a period of time and just not utilizing it, I understand the thought process there. But when you’re looking at the figures we’re looking at, I’d be very hesitate about putting anything in there about us being able to take that money back. I’m definitely for what Chairman Dunn had mentioned about we’re not necessarily writing a check and here’s your money this year. I’m good with us banking that money and holding on to it. But I mean as the project comes
through and they present, say, okay, well we’re looking at doing this project. It’s going to cost about forty thousand dollars. It’s going to take us two years to get that money. And you know, definitely project that. But I mean, I don’t want to go into it with the mentality that the municipalities are going to be able to -- we’re going to allow ourselves to take that money back because again I’ve got municipalities and I’ve got to look after that standpoint, as well as what’s best for Anderson County and its citizens.

HOLT HOPKINS: Keep in mind, like Starr, they’re going to be hard pressed to find ---
RAY GRAHAM: To do anything.
HOLT HOPKINS: --- (mic cutting out). But in realistic terms if they needed a forty thousand and they only got ten thousand allocated, more than likely they’re going to piece it together and use this as a match to go to the C-funds and get the rest (mic cutting out) of the money.
RAY GRAHAM: You’re right. And that brings up my other thing. I definitely wanted to commend Councilman Sanders on the comment about the C-funds. I definitely think we as council members need to really, really -- because if you look at the -- I mean we get letters every year, this municipality didn’t even present a project. This municipality here did not even present a project. This money here is actually allowing them to present a project with their funding on the ten percent match. We, as council, we’ve got to stress the importance that they take that ten percent and add ninety percent to it. That’s the way they’re going to get their bangs for the bucks. That’s the way we’re going to actually make a difference in the municipalities. I thought that was a great idea and definitely glad that came out. Appreciate what you guys do and I appreciate you bringing them numbers today. That made me feel a lot better having that. Thank you.

CINDY WILSON: May I?
TOMMY DUNN: Mr. Sanders is next and then
BRETT SANDERS: Mr. Hopkins?
HOLT HOPKINS: Yes, sir.
BRETT SANDERS: If we had money -- I may be off base here; I don’t know -- but (inaudible) actually know of we wouldn’t be needing (mic cutting out).
HOLT HOPKINS: We might, but looking at four million dollars that we’re not getting year after year because of ---
BRETT SANDERS: Here’s what -- and I don’t know if this is even possible, but I see the need for the road fee. I know we’re discussing things. My opinion is instead of -- I would like to see the one mil go back into paving, one mil, but also I’d like to see if there is some way we could form some type of committee with the other counties, which we met
with the other counties yesterday, and come up with some plan
or idea over this four year sunset period to put pressure on
the state to start releasing money. That way we don’t go in
as Anderson County attacking the state, but we can work as a
group. And I’d like to see, if this passed, that there is
some sort of committee or a group of counties working together
to go before the state and try to get them to release some of
the money that they actually owe us. And that’s about all I
have. Thank you.

TOMMY DUNN: Ms. Wilson.

CINDY WILSON: Well, there’s a variable
situation from one town to the other, like Starr. The town of
Williamston, this year, appropriated two hundred thousand
dollars for their roads. They realized what a critical
situation they were in. And even the amount that District 7
was able to appropriate when there were funds was inadequate.
So I still think it’s going to be very important to have a
list of priorities from each of the towns and have a sit-down
conference with them before anything is hammered out because
it may be that they all need to start budgeting a little bit
more. And it may be that some of them are already having
funds that are in their balance with the county that haven’t
been spent. So we need to get a handle on that. Thank you.

TOMMY DUNN: Getting back to what this
meeting, one of the reason it was called today, what’s the
thoughts of council about (mic cutting out) Mr. Davis brought
up.

CINDY WILSON: May I? Exemptions are going to
be so difficult to manage. In the district meetings that I’ve
had, the comment has come back, well, let’s just lower the fee
and make it across the board. And that seems to be the
general trend of thought in District 7; is to lower the fee
and to make it across the board. Thank you.

TOMMY DUNN: Mr. Graham.

RAY GRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Honestly, as far as exemptions that we put up here as far as
the sixty-four and older and the veterans, do we have a number
as far as what that’s going to pull off the table?

RITA DAVIS: It’s about forty-four thousand
vehicles. Currently that’s sixty-four and over. And of
course, the other ones are, I’d say, thirty-one hundred,
thirty-five hundred total. It’s not that many.

RAY GRAHAM: I think this here is a good
list as far as what to consider. My biggest fear on waiving
the different individuals, whatever, is if you go and do that
too much with too many different groups, at the end of the day
have we truly been able to make a difference if we move
forward with this. You know, I’m a hundred percent for, you
know, trying to help people out that needs it, but in the same
respect, if we’re going to do this, we’ve got to be able to
show a difference at the of that four years.

We as council there’s no question that my district is going to hold me accountable for this. We’ve had meetings throughout the county and talking to different members of my community, they come into my business every single day bending my ear about this. And normally, at the end of the day, they all realize we’ve got an issue with our roads. We’ve got to make some type of change on improving them.

My biggest fear is if we don’t -- if we’re not careful as far as what all we add to this list, we’ve basically done reduced it so much, are we still going to be able to make that difference? So that would be my concern as far as adding too many.

RITA DAVIS: I think there’s a discussion, we want to collect at least about four million. And the twenty-five with these exemptions would do that, twenty with no exemptions would do that.

RAY GRAHAM: I think we’ve good at where we’re at then because, I mean, I’d definitely love to see the sixty-four and older, along with our veterans, to be able to be recognized as far a -- I mean, this is just a small price as a county that we can give back to them for their services.

TOMMY DUNN: My thing, too, (mic cutting out) we’re going to charge them (mic cutting out). Ms. Floyd.

GRACIE FLOYD: I think that it should be a user’s fee. If you have a car or a driver’s license, I think that you ought to be included. I don’t like the twenty-five dollars. I think that we ought to have no exemptions for anybody.

Do you have any idea of how many people that we have coming to Anderson every day to go to work and they’re pulling in the big dollars? They buy our food. They’re up and down the road. That’s five days a week times whatever how many days we have in the year. I think that we’re missing out on a large portion. I think that we’ve stuck on four million dollars. I think we are not being visionaries. I think that it ought to be a fee that -- a one percent fee on something that everybody pays. We have done our veterans well. We can do better on our veterans. But we have given them all types of distinctions, as well as eliminations on things. But I don’t think that even they would mind a one percent. Somebody told me something about it’s a chosen fee if they put it on restaurants as they have done some things, the one percent on meals and stuff like they have done some things, then if you don’t want to pay it, you don’t have to go eat there or wherever. But it’s happening everywhere except Anderson County. I don’t think that we really realize the flack that we took because of the hospitality tax. We are not visionary people. We only look for the short term. I think the long term would be to include everyone, even the out-of-towners,
the Highway 85ers, anyone who comes into our town for anything.

Now, I don’t know what happened to Greenwood, I don’t know what happened to Greenwood. But I do know what’s happening to other places. That’s how I feel about it.

TOMMY DUNN: We’ve got laws to go by, too.

(Mic cutting out).

GRACIE FLOYD: Excuse me. You only made a comment on what I said. What about the other things you’ve heard here tonight. Do you have any comments on what they said?

TOMMY DUNN: I just said we’re talking about exemptions. I brought this up three times. We’re trying to stay on putting nuts and bolts. We’re not -- you keep bringing back up and wanting to argue about or debate a road fee, not doing one. And that’s coming. Today we’re trying to put an ordinance to give us something to debate.

GRACIE FLOYD: Okay. But Mr. Chair, ---

TOMMY DUNN: Putting nuts and bolts in something.

GRACIE FLOYD: Mr. Chair, the agenda item that I was sent, it says discussion of road fee. It didn’t give any parameters about the discussion. It didn’t say what you could discuss or what you could not discuss. It said a discussion on road fee. And I don’t think I was arguing. I think what I was trying to ---

TOMMY DUNN: I said debating. I changed my mind and said debate. Well, you changed you mind and said debate. Well, I’m changing mine and I’m saying argument. But anyway, I don’t think I was doing -- I think what I was trying to do was put a -- was to point out some things that we need to be aware of. And I was in my right because it is -- I am discussing these things.

TOMMY DUNN: All right. (Mic cutting out).

GRACIE FLOYD: ... prerogative.

CINDY WILSON: Just for the sake of consideration, I did ask Ms. Rita if she could figure out what a fee in lieu of tax funds would total of what’s in the pipeline right now; not in the past. In the past, the school districts, I’ve heard various seventy-five to eighty-five percent of what they were getting, and the county about fifteen percent. Most of that goes to the sewer debt service and also other items. But if we took that stream of revenue and looked at that and applied what comes forward -- what’s going forward, that may end of actually providing more than what we could do slicing and dicing a road fee. But it would be worth looking at.

TOMMY DUNN: I’ve asked him and that’s another thing, to come up to look at that. The biggest thing
on that is, to me, on the top end, you can’t -- talking to Mr. Harmon, you can’t go back, you’ve got to go forward.

CINDY WILSON: Uh-huh (affirmative).

TOMMY DUNN: How are you going to do a budget or know when you don’t know -- we might do no fee in lieu of agreements when things are bad or we may do twenty, but how are you going to (mic cutting out) where that money ---

CINDY WILSON: Well, it would be helpful to see where we are right now.

TOMMY DUNN: Right now, as you know, fee in lieu of thing, we get, off the top, fifteen percent. Then we can add (mic cutting out) eighty-five percent that’s left. So our total on that is forty-three percent.

CINDY WILSON: I keep hearing so many different numbers, I don’t know what’s actual ---

TOMMY DUNN: I asked Ms. Davis yesterday to double check these numbers. Is that correct?

RITA DAVIS: That’s close; yes, sir.

TOMMY DUNN: Then on top of that if you want to cut (mic cutting out) on depreciation.

RITA DAVIS: That’s right. The volatility of that is just what’s so uncertain and hard. Mr. Hogan couldn’t really budget on anything that’s projected and that’s uncertain.

CINDY WILSON: Well, looking at the tables that Mr. Nelson has given us of what the stream of revenue is and the fee in lieu of taxes and then the multi-county parks and the special credits for infrastructure, it looks like a fairly regular amount of funding coming from that one company. And we’ve got several in the works right now that will pay fairly substantial. And we’ve got some more really big sounding projects that may be coming, too. I think it’s time to at least look at that.

RITA DAVIS: I’ll get with you.

CINDY WILSON: And whether we do it in reference to replacing what would be a road fee with that income or just going forward, because this county has millions and millions of dollars worth of infrastructure needs. And there’s just no way to fund it. The schools, each district came to each of us individually, I guess it was three or four years ago, and asked if we were going to consider putting in a one percent sales tax. And we were all reluctant to even discuss it because of the recession and the hardship for people in our county. They went ahead and did it, and what is that bringing in for them now? Somewhere around a hundred million; is that what I heard?

TOMMY DUNN: (Mic cutting out).

CINDY WILSON: So they already have a more substantial revenue stream to cover those fees. But the
county still, we only make a fraction of what the schools do, and I’m not begrudging them; that’s a key part of our infrastructure, to educate our population and to be able to provide workers for industry and so forth, but there has to be a balance there to provide what the county is expected to provide. We’ve got police, we’ve got roads, we’ve got all of that to tend to. So I’m going to request that we have those numbers to look at ——

RITA DAVIS:  Yes, ma’am.
CINDY WILSON:  --- and start discussing what’s going to work best for our citizens. For example, when we had the joint meeting Wednesday, Mr. Costner, who’s the chairman for Pickens County, explained that they have the twenty dollar road fee and they’re looking at having to go up because it’s inadequate. Well, if they have a twenty dollar road fee and we’re looking at anything from fifteen to twenty-five dollars and it’s inadequate over there and we’re hearing it’s inadequate elsewhere, surely we need to look at other forms of funding, as well. Thank you.

TOMMY DUNN:  I agree.
GRACIE FLOYD:  Mr. Chairman.

Davis has talked to their finance director who has told them that theirs collects around two million, Ms. Davis, what they’re taking in ---

RITA DAVIS:  I didn’t really talk about the amount -- yeah, I think you’re right now that I think about it.

TOMMY DUNN:  Two million they’re taking in and they don’t -- what they’re basing it on is just like ours, the roads -- to do all their roads, come back around, will take twenty-five years. No, I’m sorry; fifty years. The roads are only going to last twenty years, what they’re got to cycle. That’s what they’re basing theirs on. Anybody, and we’ve said this from the get-go, anybody -- if it were to pass, if we were to take in four million dollars, that’s not going to fix all our road problems. We know it’s not. But it’s a start. What we’ve got now (mic cutting out) starting a budgeting thing, what not. What Pickens is looking at and talking to them in this, I don’t think (mic cutting out) people’s talked about here today is a one percent sales tax. In doing that you’ve got to get a list of things what you’re going to do. You’ve got to get them out there. And then the citizens have got to vote on it. Greenwood just done that and their projection was they’re not going to be able to do everything they said they was going to do. So you know you’ve got a bunch of mad people now when they promised them they’re going to do this and they’re not going to be able to do that because they didn’t take in the money they (mic cutting out). You’ve got to keep those things in mind. You can only do what
(mic cutting out). You can’t add what not to it. And as far as life span, ten years, Mr. Burns? Eight years? Just on that right there that needs to be looking at.

But on the fee in lieu of thing, that is something that needs to be looked at. I think at first I brought up about the fire departments, we talked about this. Mr. Davis brought it up and I thought it was a good idea. I don’t think we should be -- a portion of that money we get, if a plant x is going to come into the Creightonville area, Creightonville out to be the one getting the majority of the money on the fire thing because they’re the ones toting the heavy lifting and they’re the ones got to do the fire service there, instead of going straight to the fire commission. Ms. Floyd.

GRACIE FLOYD:

Thank you. Ms. Wilson, I’m going to do something I don’t think I have done in the twenty years I have been on this board. I applaud you. Yeah, it’s a shock. I’m shocked. I applaud you. What you said was right on the money about the school district, about what’s happening to our money, about why our roads are so bad, about why we have to tack twenty-five dollars on everybody or pass a one cent sales tax or whatever. But you left something out. You talked about the one cents tax that we were afraid to do but they did and got away with it, but you left out fee in lieu of. Y’all have heard me embark on my latest tirade, if that’s a word, on fee in lieu of taxes, too much of it, it’s too much. But did you know that the local taxes or that the taxes that we do get from fee in lieu, seventy percent of it goes to the school district. I beg your pardon? Who said what? But anyway, seventy percent of that money goes to the school district, which is great, which is good. But in our time of need, in the county’s time of need, it appears as if we should be negotiating with the school district to give us some funds back so that we can accomplish what we need to accomplish here, and that’s roads. Ms. Wilson, did you bring up that point? Okay, I’m sorry. I apologize, I didn’t -- I was so excited about what you were saying I probably didn’t hear it, but I apologize. But anyway, that’s part of our problem. That’s part of the problem here. And I can be quoted on that.

TOMMY DUNN:

Does anybody here know, just general property tax, pay your bills, your property tax, say your property is one hundred dollars; regular property tax (mic cutting out). So it’s no different than fee in lieu of. (Mic cutting out) fee in lieu of, a little bit of something is better than a whole lot of nothing. I can go down -- prime example down there at First Quality. There wouldn’t be no fee in lieu of, as the man said at the meeting Wednesday, Chairman of Greenville County, about how it operates. Unfortunately Ms. Wilson has harped on for years and years and years, corporate tax is ten percent, over ten and a half percent in Anderson County -- I mean not in Anderson; in the state of
South Carolina. We’ve got no way under the sun to compete with nobody. We have to do incentives. Down there where First Quality is, that was going to be an abandoned warehouse. What would they pay, Mr. Burns?

RUSTY BURNS: If they were going to take an abandoned warehouse to agriculture (mic not on).

TOMMY DUNN: (Mic cutting out). Just a rough guess.

RITA DAVIS: (Not at mic).

TOMMY DUNN: No, I’m talking about First Quality taxes, what they’ve paid since they’ve been in Anderson.

RITA DAVIS: (Not at mic).

TOMMY DUNN: Been in the millions; right?

RUSTY BURNS: Yes, in the addition to the people who work there who ---

TOMMY DUNN: I’m fixing to talk about that. The state’s got a formula, and Senator Gambrell said at the meeting Wednesday, anything commerce does, how much that -- how much it pays back and it pays for itself and more in jobs creation and people buying stuff and everything.

Everybody has got their opinion about things and I’ve got mine. And I don’t think stirring up fee in lieu of, what was done -- it started back with Michelin in Sandy Springs wouldn’t be here in Anderson today (mic cutting out) if it wasn’t for fee in lieu of.

CINDY WILSON: May I make a comment?

TOMMY DUNN: Ms. Wilson.

CINDY WILSON: I helped plant the pine trees down on the BASF property that got harvested ahead of First Quality going in there. And yes, they were paying I think about four hundred and fifty thousand a year for the warehouse and converting it back to timberland would have been two dollars an acre. And if you look at all the executive summaries that Mr. Nelson gives to us on each request for fee in lieu of taxes, invariably the difference between what the property is paying currently as opposed to what it’s paying in the change in use, that is substantial. The only fine ointment here is now that the schools have the one percent, we do need to re-examine the fee in lieu of tax structure that the county can provide the infrastructure that we’re expected to provide.

TOMMY DUNN: I agree.

CINDY WILSON: Thank you.

RAY GRAHAM: Mr. Chairman.

TOMMY DUNN: Mr. Graham.

RAY GRAHAM: A few separate things. You know, everybody is talking about fee in lieu, which to me is completely off base when it comes to the road fee, which is what we should be talking about with this meeting. But one
thing I’m going to bring up about that, yeah, we went from three and a half percent in July to two point eight percent in August on unemployment, which is just absolutely outstanding. I commend economic development and our county employees on what they’ve done with this. And you know, that’s great, that’s really great, unless you’re in that two point eight percent. If you’re in that two point eight percent, man, you appreciate that fee in lieu. You appreciate them companies coming in here and giving our people jobs that turns around and puts money back into the coffers in Anderson County to help continue support us in moving forward.

With that being said, back on the road fee, my only other commend on that, if we pass this, if we move forward with this, back on the deal as far as the one mil, you know, in talking to my district, people in my community, my concern with giving that one mil back, on a hundred thousand dollar home, what is that magic number? Four dollars? Let me run out here and smack my citizens in the face and tell them they’re going to pay twenty-five dollars a car, but I’m going to give them four dollars back. To me that is very poor management on our part. If we’re going to suck it up and we’re going to vote for this, my point on that would be to keep that one mil because I’ll be durn if I want to give a mil back and then have to raise taxes next year for something else. Keep that mil, put it toward the roads, correct our problem that we have built ourselves over the past several years on not being able to fund these roads, get them in proper condition and move forward. That four dollars is not going to benefit no family in Anderson County. I mean it’s just that simple. If we’re going to tell them we’re going to charge you twenty-five dollars a car, but we’re going to give you four dollars back, that’s very poor management on our part.

That’s strictly my opinion. I’m sure everybody has one as far as on council, but if we move forward I would definitely say keep that money. If we want to do anything, either keep it toward the general fund or put it toward the roads. But I do not think we need to try to give that back.

Mr. Chairman.

I have to agree with Mr. Graham. I’ve thought about this (mic cutting out). Worst thing you can do is give it and next year you have to take it back. I’d say keep it in the general fund. You can always slide it over and put it in (mic cutting out) asphalt if we need it. Ms. Floyd.

Okay, good. I’d like to say something here. Mr. Graham, I know that your passion is that one mil thing you were just talking about. And I have no problems with your passion. I have no problems whatsoever. My passion is fee in lieu. Okay. They’re doing all these
great things for Anderson County. They’re coming in here, they’re building these buildings, they’re bringing in fourteen billion dollars here and fifteen billion there. Where’s the money? Have you seen any of the money? If they’re doing so well and helping us so much, why are we over here talking about raising taxes on people? Why did the school district have to go and float a one percent tax? Why is it we can’t have the recreational facilities here in Anderson that we deserve? Why is it that I can’t get a park built over on Broadway Lake? Why do we have seventy-seven burnt houses down here? Why is Holt and Hogan over there scratching for money to build these roads and stuff?

People, look at the forest as well as the trees. Or maybe I should say it the other way, look at the trees as well as the forest. Yes, they’re bringing in jobs, but they’re bringing in high quality jobs on top of that. But do you realize that a lot of the people who are going to these companies for jobs already had jobs working in the other facility because they only pick the best. Do you realize there are some people who didn’t have any jobs are still -- they have jobs now but they’re still low income people? Do you realize? All right. We’re so fascinated with ourselves about how many companies we’re bringing in here and who’s coming, that we’re not really looking at the big picture. Come. Our doors are wide open. But bring some money when you come. Bring some money that we can put in our coffers for people who need it. Bring some money so that we can take care of our roads and our other situations that we have. Don’t tell me about oh, how wonderful, we couldn’t have gotten this. Sometimes I wonder if it had been better we had just taken our time and sold what we had to offer rather than make up stuff for them. We will give you a hundred acres of land and we will put in the water for you and we will give you -- we’ll build a new school down the street for you if you’ll just come and pay some of these people -- pay nineteen people fifteen dollars an hour. No, I don’t buy it. And this is my passion. And if you have a problem with it, I wish that you would -- I wish that you would be as nice and kind as I am about your passion instead of trying to tear mine down, because you won’t.

TOMMY DUNN: Mr. Sanders.
BRETT SANDERS: I agree wholeheartedly with Councilman Graham (mic cutting out) one mil.
TOMMY DUNN: I want everybody just to keep in mind (mic cutting out) talk about this in the town hall meetings. I think we’ve had fourteen or fifteen of them and I’ve been to every one of them.
GRACIE FLOYD: We had thirty at mine.
TOMMY DUNN: Town hall meetings, going to them, we’ve had fourteen or fifteen throughout the county.
I've been to every one of them. Been listening to people and
talking to them. Keep in mind, you know, talking about these
companies and all coming in, where's the money gone? We've
just done pay raises. (Mic cutting out) losing our employees,
trying to hold them (mic cutting out) having been getting.
We've had to put a roof over there on the new courthouse. Had
to put one on the civic center. Had to put an air
conditioning unit and chiller in the new courthouse. Those
three things alone was over three million dollars. It comes
up we have a million dollars to spend on this building right
here. Roads have been neglected for, I don't know, fifteen,
twenty years. Ten years before I got on council. Kicking it
down the road, kicking it down the road, and we ain't going to
be no better than them other council members if we don't try
to get something -- that's what it's all about. I said
before, I'm undecided and want to talk, but if we don't do
something, don't plan about the roads, we can sit here and
say, well, the money's there, find it, open budget. Go
through this thing, go through the budget workshop and go
through it. It ain't there, no four million dollars, to fix
the roads.

If nobody's got something else on this, I think we've got
something to work with now, for the staff to put together.
You got anything else, Ms. Davis?

RITA DAVIS: Just for your time and
comments. I appreciate it.

GRACIE FLOYD: Excuse me. I never did to get
to ask my question.

TOMMY DUNN: Go ahead.

GRACIE FLOYD: Ms. Davis, go back to the -- I
have a mouthful of food now. Go back to the second power
point that you had.

RITA DAVIS: The second slide, ma'am? Is
that one it?

GRACIE FLOYD: Go to the third.

RITA DAVIS: That one?

GRACIE FLOYD: Third.

RITA DAVIS: Which one? That one right
there with the exemptions, ma'am?

GRACIE FLOYD: Uh-uh (negative). The next
one. Right there. I didn't understand. There was a
discussion of reducing the general fund by one mil if the road
fee was passed.

RITA DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

GRACIE FLOYD: Ms. Davis, was this the one mil
that Ray Graham was just talking about?

RITA DAVIS: Yes, ma'am.

GRACIE FLOYD: Okay.

RITA DAVIS: He was addressing his thoughts
on this slide; yes, ma'am.
GRACIE FLOYD: Okay. Well, I didn’t know what it was. He wasn’t jumped when he mentioned that, and I didn’t understand it because I didn’t understand this thing here that you were talking about. I tried to ask earlier. But would you explain that again, please? There was discussion of --
RITA DAVIS: At town hall meetings, at his town hall meeting.
GRACIE FLOYD: Okay. That wasn’t discussed at mine. Why would we want to -- I know we’re not going to do this and this is up for discussion, but why would we reduce the general fund by one mil if the road fee was passed?
RITA DAVIS: Initial discussion was to give the taxpayers a break, to give them some money back. And like Mr. Graham was saying that would be four dollars on a hundred thousand dollar house. You’re asking them to pay potentially twenty, twenty-five, and only giving them four back.
GRACIE FLOYD: Four dollars?
RITA DAVIS: Yes, ma’am.
GRACIE FLOYD: Four dollars back; okay, good. Now I understand what he was talking about. If I was allowed to ask that question earlier, I wouldn’t have been so confused. But yeah, I agree with him, as well.
RITA DAVIS: Okay.
GRACIE FLOYD: I’m not the sharpest knife in the drawer, but I sure as hell am not the dullest.
TOMMY DUNN: We’re going to move this. I think we’ve got something for staff to put together.
LEON HARMON: Mr. Chairman, we have one citizen signed up; Elizabeth Fant.
ELIZABETH FANT: Elizabeth Fant, District 3. This whole thing is wearing me out.
GRACIE FLOYD: Me, too.
ELIZABETH FANT: I thought that according to the sign-in sheet and so forth that this was discussion on road fee. I had the same idea as Ms. Floyd, to me discussion of a road fee is not a done deal. The chairman just a minute ago said we’re going to have a road fee. Why are we having a meeting on a discussion on a road fee if it’s already a done deal? I was about to agree with the road fee thing until the other night when Ms. Floyd had her thing and then I saw really what a hardship it’s going to present. And I see other things that came up out of that meeting that I hadn’t really noticed, as well.
Two things that came up was the county’s broke. The county doesn’t have but two months’ worth of reserve. If the county is broke, broken, then we need to be looking at some things about management and what we’re spending money on and
so forth because if we’re that bad off, we’re bad off.

The second thing was, people kept saying, oh, well, this
money is going to come in and then it’s going to go to other
things. I heard it was not going to go to other things, but
then I also heard in the power point presentation, well, yeah,
we could take the money from roads and bridges and put it in
the asphalt. That’s taking money from somewhere else. And
roads and bridges needs that money to do grass cutting, signs,
ditches, all the things that it does.

The third thing I’d like to mention is a city resident
pays double taxes. When they pay their tax bill, they pay a
city tax and they pay a county tax, which is a lot more than
what a county tax person. Are we saying that they’re only
going to get what’s for their city portion but they don’t get
enough for county portion, but they’re paying twice as much
tax? That extra mil, if we put it back into the county, Mr.
Graham, I agree that it should probably stay there. But is it
going to get for roads or is it just going to go to the
general fund? Again, I don’t see any guarantee that this
paving money is not going to go to parking lots at the civic
center, tennis courts, parking lots for fire departments and
so forth. And if you all have fixed that roof on the
courthouse across the street, somebody needs to go do another
inspection. When I travel on Murray Avenue, I can see at
least ten tiles that are missing. I vote for a one cent sales
tax.

LEON HARMON: Time, Mr. Chairman.

ELIZABETH FANT: And I have been taking pictures
of all the things on roads and I believe I could do a
presentation that could prove that we need the one cent sales
tax.

TOMMY DUNN: For the record, (mic cutting
out) I never said that no -- it’s a done deal. What this is
about, if they -- you’ve got to have an ordinance before we
vote with something in it. That’s what this is about, to have
something another.

Ms. Fant, you can shake your head, and I’m going to tell
you what, it’s unbelievable you get up and make these
statements, and I really don’t understand where it’s coming
from. Is it stemming back because council and the
administrator wouldn’t give you a job that you asked for and
give you a car that you asked for and a salary? This is mind
boggling to me.

Meeting will be closed.

(MEETING ADJOURNED AT 1:28 P.M.)